

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-4, 6, and 8-31 are presently active in this case. The present Amendment amends Claims 1-3, 8-10, 12, 15-17, 19, 22-26 without introducing any new matter, and cancels Claims 32-34 without prejudice or disclaimer.

The outstanding Office Action rejected Claims 1-4, 6, 8-28 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Sato (U.S. Patent No. 5,276,875) in view of Dutton et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,072,585; herein "Dutton"). Claims 32-34 were indicated as being allowable if rewritten in independent form.

Applicant acknowledges with appreciation the indication of allowable subject matter. In response Claims 1-3 are amended to recite all the features of dependent Claims 32-34, to thereby be in condition for allowance. Consequently, Claims 32-34 are cancelled. Independent Claims 15-17 and 19 are also amended to recite the features of allowable dependent Claim 32.

In addition, independent method Claims 8-10 and 12 are amended to recite similar features as of allowable dependent Claim 32, but rewritten in method claim language. Independent computer program product Claims 22-24 and 26 are amended to recite similar features as of allowable dependent Claim 32, but rewritten as computer program claims. Dependent Claim 25 is amended to correct a minor formality in light of the changes to independent Claim 24.

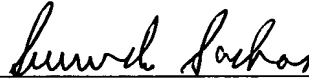
Since all the independent claims are amended to recite the features of allowable, dependent Claims 32-34, Applicant believes that the present application is in condition for allowance.

Consequently, in view of the present Amendment, no further issues are believed to be outstanding in the present application, and the present application is believed to be in condition for formal Allowance. A Notice of Allowance for Claims 1-4, 6 and 8-31 is earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner deem that any further action is necessary to place this application in even better form for allowance, the Examiner is encouraged to contact Applicant's undersigned representative at the below listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

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